




United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

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OWF POLICY MEMORANDUM 2016-06

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, National Park Service
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
Director, U.S. Geological Survey

From: Jim Douglas, Director – Office of Wildland Fire 

Subject: Unprotected Lands; Identifying Wildland Fire Protection Responsibilities in Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystems

Purpose: The purpose of this Policy Memorandum is to provide direction for providing fire protection in Great Basin sagebrush-steppe habitat where there is no designated entity for fire protection. Many of these areas adjoin or are closely proximal to lands protected by the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service.

Background: The Final Report to the Secretary of the Interior (May 2015) for Secretarial Order 3336, *An Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy* outlines a set of longer-term actions and activities with assigned responsibilities and target completion timeframes. This OWF Policy Memorandum addresses *Action Item #6 for Section 7(b)ii. – Prioritization and Allocation of Resources*, directing the Fire Executives to support efforts to identify responsibility for protecting all lands by providing technical advice and assistance to state and local governments to define responsibilities for those lands that currently lack wildland fire protection. The outcome of providing this support is to improve utilization of fire management resources and assets in relation to rangeland fire, increase efficiency, and reduce costs.

Scope: This Policy Memorandum applies to Department of the Interior bureau and office activities involving Great Basin sagebrush-steppe habitat.

Time Frame: This Policy Memorandum is effective immediately and remains in effect until rescinded or modified, or superseded by updates to the Departmental Manual.

Policy: Each of the bureaus, BLM, BIA, NPS, and FWS within the Great Basin sagebrush-steppe habitat are responsible for working with state and local governments to provide advice and assistance to define responsibilities for wildland fire protection on all lands adjacent to lands managed by those Bureaus. Where necessary, state master cooperative agreements for wildland fire should be reviewed and updated accordingly.

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Cc: Interior Fire Directors
Interior Fire Executives